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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S J. FRAZER

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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE FEATURED AT SOUTH AFRICAN CABINET MEETING

¶1. On November 19, 2008 the South African Government's (SAG) cabinet discussed Zimbabwe and other issues. The SAG released a statement on November 20. Text related to Zimbabwe follows:

¶2. Begin text: Cabinet is extremely concerned about the political impasse that is creating a humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. The reported outbreak of cholera in parts of that country is a clear indication that ordinary Zimbabweans are the true victims of their leaders' lack of political will and failure to demonstrate seriousness to resolve the political impasse. The Government is disappointed to note that political interests have taken priority at the expense of the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans.

South Africa calls on the leaders of Zimbabwe to take urgent steps to finalise the amendments to their constitution, the allocation of the remaining Cabinet posts and the formation of a representative Government without any further delay and before the situation of ordinary Zimbabweans degenerates any further. No amount of political disagreement can ever justify the suffering that ordinary Zimbabweans are being subjected to at the moment. Like SADC, South Africa would like to see a political settlement sooner rather than later so that the region could start focusing on the most urgent measures needed to rebuild Zimbabwe's economy.

Cabinet decided that South Africa should immediately assist the people of Zimbabwe to address the cholera outbreak as well as scaling up malaria control activities in the cross border area. South Africa is already in discussions with multilateral agencies such as SADC and the World Health Organisation in this regard. A strategy will be put in place on an urgent basis to provide assistance to the people of Zimbabwe and to provide support to our health authorities in the Limpopo province to enable them to cope with the serious situation.

An Interdepartmental Task Team will be set up urgently to identify and implement measures to ensure that the reported service delivery crisis in Zimbabwe does not lead to increased cross-border movement to the health facilities in the Limpopo province that are already over-stretched. The team will be led by the Department of Health and will include the Departments of Foreign Affairs, Water Affairs and Forestry, Provincial and Local Government. Other departments will be joining the team on a needs basis.

The meeting noted that the window of opportunity for South Africa to provide assistance to the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe had passed due to the failure of Zimbabwean political leaders to form a representative government. Cabinet decided that the approved R300 million will be retained for agricultural assistance to Zimbabwe. However, this money will be only disbursed once a representative government was in place and in time for the next planting season in April 2009. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs will prepare a proposal on South Africa's

contribution to address the immediate humanitarian situation  
in Zimbabwe.

[¶](#)3. End text.

BOST